

# RESPONSIBILITY REPORT

2022/2023



**Rocket  
Products**

# COMPANY STATEMENT

At Rocket Products, working with charities makes us aware of the ever-changing world around us and the difficulties faced by our clients. Every charity aims to make a positive difference on lives around the world, which we know we can play a part in, as this starts by ensuring the fair and ethical treatment of the people doing work on their behalf.

Merchandise has become a key component of the modern fundraising strategy, therefore, establishing ethical practices within this supply chain is critical to charity's values. Therefore, at Rocket Products, we strive to design and deliver quality charity merchandise that has a minimal impact on people and the planet and helps our clients to achieve their goals. We believe that everyone has a role to play to reduce the impacts of climate change and eradicate environmental and social injustices.

Therefore, this report has been created to aid us in achieving this. It has been split up between sections of people, planet, product, and prosperity to help us break down the different sections of our business that we need to make change.

It also follows our responsibility roadmap which is outlined below. We have referred to responsibility in the title of this report as opposed to sustainability because, as a promotional merchandise company, it would not be possible to be sustainable in all that we do, so this is about making us more responsible in each action we take as a company.

As this report encompasses all areas in which our business needs to take responsibility, this report can be accounted for as our Corporate Social Responsibility Policy.

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

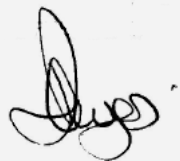
This last year has seen an exciting turn in our company as we have become more responsible, ethical and sustainable in our business practices. The Covid-19 pandemic and the social challenges that this revealed enabled us to reflect on our company values and how we operate. The wide range of individuals that our clients work with and sell to has also driven us to change how we do things as we know how far the impacts of our operations reach.

We have made huge progress so far which you will read about in this report, and the most exciting part is that this is only the beginning of our journey. To make these changes we have appointed a sustainability lead, and bridge workers for them to liaise with in each department. We have begun carbon offsetting across various scopes of our business, created a range of guides and information documents, and changed our company policy documents that are available for all staff and clients to access to help educate and integrate all our stakeholders into our responsible mindset. We have also expanded our range of responsible products, and as a result, increased the sales of these products.

For instance, we can now produce all our technical sportswear items from recycled plastic bottles, all our metal products can be made from an FSC approved MDF or bamboo alternative, and all our cotton products have an organic alternative. This is just a few of our most popular products amidst our vast responsible product range.

I am pleased to share that we are well into stage 3 of our roadmap and have already touched on parts of stage 4. All stages are under constant review and we are always looking for new ways we can change are current practices to become as responsible as we can be. This report shares all the details of our success and the exciting plans that we have for 2023 and beyond. It shows the vision we have to become a leader in producing high quality merchandise that has a minimal impact on people and the planet and helps our clients to achieve their goals.

**Daniel Lyons**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Lyons', with a stylized flourish at the end.

# RESPONSIBILITY ROADMAP

Our roadmap follows a clear path of actions we need to take as a company to become more responsible in our business operations.

It begins with quick changes to our website and products, that will enable our clients to make the most sustainable choices for them.

It then moves on to internal policies and initiatives which will change the work culture and the way we think at Rocket Products. We then move to carbon counting for our entire supply chain, which is going to be a long process which we are in the midst of planning. This will lead to our carbon reduction initiatives and offsetting schemes.

These actions will help to reduce our impact on people and the environment, which we hope will make us a leader in responsible merchandise, enabling us to help our clients achieve their goals without harming people or the environment in the process.

## 1 Website and Product

- Publish all certifications on our website to make it clear to clients what we are doing and our values
- Expand our range of responsible products
- Provide eco credentials, alternatives and filter options to help customers choose the most environmentally friendly product option
- Plastic free packaging

## 2 Internal policies and initiatives

- Ethical
- Environmental
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Supplier code of conduct
- Recycling scheme
- Paperless policy
- Internal carbon initiatives to lower our footprint - with targets





## 3 Carbon counting

- Scopes 1 and 2 in the office
- Scope 3 - procurement
- Carbon footprint for every product on our website
- Carbon footprint of freight
- Look to renewable energy within all scopes of our supply chain

## 4 Offsetting and reduction

- Offsetting programme for scopes 1 and 2 of the business
- Transportation offsetting programme
- Product offsetting scheme
- Carbon reduction targets for all 3 of these categories, to reduce what needs to be offset

# Our Progress So Far



## **Achieving the Earthly Climate Positive Business Certification**

We have partnered with Earthly to achieve their Climate Positive Business certification, which involved calculating our carbon emissions within scopes 1, 2 and 3 of our business.

We now offset 110% of this carbon by investing in nature-based projects that are verified by an independent scientific board.



## **Switching the products in our office to be made of responsible materials**

We have gone through many of the everyday items that we use in our offices and swapped them for more responsible alternatives. We now use recycled toilet paper and paper towels. All our cleaning products are biodegradable and refillable. All our disposable kitchen equipment is now compostable, and we no longer buy new stationary as we have made our own notebooks out of our old header paper, and all pens are overs or samples sent to us from suppliers.



## **Offering recycled polyester for sports clothing**

We have worked with our supplier in Pakistan to make all our sports clothing available in recycled polyester. This has been developed by Gatron industries who have created their Ecoron range, which turns old plastic bottles into fabric. 5 bottles are used to make each of our sports tops. The fabric is certified by OEKO-TEX Standard 100 and the Global Recycling Standard.



## **Obtaining the Earthly Climate Positive Transportation Certification**

We receive an annual carbon report from DHL each April which gives us the carbon footprint of all our shipments. We have used this data to begin offsetting the carbon footprint of all our freight sent via DHL. Not only do we offset this, but we now offset 110% of this and have subsequently received the Carbon Positive Transportation Certification from Earthly.

We do this by investing in an additional nature-based project.



## **Developing a sustainability team**

We have created a sustainability team that is a combination of our senior management team, HR and sales. This enables us to cover a wide range of areas when thinking about how we can become more sustainable, so we can consider people, supply chain management, economics, and the environment.



## **Rewritten environmental policy**

As a result of all the changes we have made over the last year we have rewritten our environmental policy to incorporate these changes.

This policy is available on both websites and on a shared folder for all employees to read.



## **Responsible care guide**

We have created two responsible care guides for our clothing. One for our sportswear made of recycled polyester and the other for our cotton clothing. We send these out to clients when they place a clothing order with us.

They cover a range of methods that clients can use to care for their clothes in a more responsible way, such as what detergents to use, water temperature, tumble drying and ironing.



## **Responsible sourcing guide**

We have developed two responsible sourcing guides. One for our sales teams to help advise clients on how to make their orders more sustainable. And one for clients so that they know what products will work best for them in line with their charity's values.

These guides cover areas of material, packaging, transportation, disposability, and certification, therefore covering different areas for clients and employees to consider.



## **Guide to alternative materials**

As a lot of terms within sustainability can be confusing, we have developed a guide to alternative materials, to help clients and employees navigate what would work best for them. It covers materials that have been recycled, or are cellulose based and discusses how they can be disposed of – recycled, biodegradable or compostable.

This guide can be found on our website and is available on a shared folder for all employees to read.



## **Eco friendly fact sheet**

To eliminate any confusion with sustainable terms, we have created an eco-friendly fact sheet which is a glossary for all sustainability related terms that can be found in the promotional merchandise world. This guide can be found on our website and is available on a shared folder for all employees to read.



## **Supplier code of conduct**

We have had a supplier code of conduct for several years, but this year we have updated it to keep in line with the new SA8000 guidelines.

This covers all our ethical standards that suppliers must meet for us to work with them. All our existing suppliers have had to complete this, and we now send it out to any new suppliers we may work with.



## — Culture

Change the work culture at Rocket to be sustainability focussed - consider social, environmental, and economic factors under one umbrella in everything we do.

- Weave this into all of our company policies and handbooks.
- Hold companywide semi-annual responsibility meetings.
- Send informative emails on sustainability updates internally and to clients.

## Our Progress

We have rewritten our environmental, ethical and equality, diversity, and inclusion policies to incorporate all the changes we have made over the last year.

We hold semi-annual responsibility meetings to keep everyone in the company up to date on what we are doing and to bring any new ideas to the table. We have created a product sourcing guide to help employees and clients find products that fit their values and goals – this is available on both our websites and a shared folder that all employees can access.that meet their budget and values.

We are working to ensure that there is enough information available to all employees so that they can successfully offer a service and product to our clients that is sustainability focussed. This is through information guides, meetings, and employee mailers.

**Ensure our company policy on equality, diversity and inclusion is upheld within the company itself and our supply chains.**

- Ensure our anti-discrimination policy is working to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.
2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination; promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
3. Take complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination seriously, by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others during the company's work activities.

4. Make opportunities for training, development, and progress available to all staff.

5. Make decisions concerning staff based on merit.

6. Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness.

- These commitments will enable us to ensure our values are upheld within the office space between employees, but also between employees and clients and employees and suppliers.

## Our Progress

We have developed our anti-discrimination policy to be in line with the 2010 Equality Act to ensure that we are encompassing all areas in which individuals are diverse; this ensures equality and inclusion within our business. We have filtered each of these features into our supplier code of conduct, to ensure our values on equality, diversity and inclusion are shared with our suppliers.

This document is available on our website so all clients can see where we stand.

We are currently in the process of appointing a diversity team, who are planning to create an anonymous survey to send out to all employees, in early 2023, for their views on equality, diversity, and inclusion at our company.

We are also planning on getting an expert to train our staff on equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.

Based on this training and the surveys, the diversity team will work to improve areas that are flagged within the workplace.

**Create bridge workers in each department to work with the sustainability team and feed our plans through into each team and department.**

## Our Progress

We have appointed these in our non-charities and production teams. We hold regular meetings with these employees to notify them of any changes or progress to filter through to their teams.

### **Ensure supply chain traceability and transparency.**

- Ensure we have audited certifications for all our factories.
- Work with these factories to ensure all third-party suppliers have these certifications too.
- Develop a supply chain map for all our Pakistan and Far East factories.
- Ensure all UK factories have the correct certification for products and that their factories are compliant with our standards.

- Create an information sheet for employees with UK suppliers that meet these standards and the products that they specialise in.

## Our Progress

All our factories we use outside of the UK are SMETA audited. So, the next stage is to work with them to find out if their suppliers are too. Once we have done this, we will then work to ensure that our supply chains for all our bespoke products are audited.

To do this we will create supply chain maps for each of our products, alongside supplier profiles with details of factory audits and third-party suppliers.

After this first stage is complete, we will then begin to work with our UK suppliers to ensure they have certifications for all their responsible products, and that all their suppliers are fully audited.

We will then create supplier profiles the same as above for each of our UK suppliers that will be available to all employees, to ensure that we are only working with fully certified and audited UK suppliers.

**Create bridge workers in each department to work with the sustainability team and feed our plans through into each team and department.**



## — Accountability

Implement our values into our supply chain as we need to be held accountable for all our operations.

- Do this through enforcing our supplier code of conduct.
- Create a supply chain map.
- Publish this and our certifications on our website.
- Create a responsible UK supplier guide and ensure all employees follow it.

## Our Progress

We have ensured all our ethical and environmental values are covered in our supplier code of conduct, which is also in line with the SA8000 standard. We have sent this round to all our existing suppliers and will continue to do so with any new suppliers.

We are going to begin working on our supply chain maps and supplier guides for employees by following the steps highlighted above, under supply chain traceability and transparency.

**Create a supplier code of conduct that we must follow to work with our suppliers.**

- This will incorporate all our ethical and environmental values as well as the standards in the SA8000 – a universal ethical framework that sets a clear standard for ethical manufacturing.

## Our Progress

We have sent this round to all our existing suppliers and will continue to do so with any new suppliers.

**Update and publish internal policies and documents:**

- Ethical Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Responsibility report – which will be treated as our CSR policy

## Our Progress

We have updated all these as of Autumn 2022. We went through all our existing policies and updated them into a new format to fit what we have done so far and what we plan to do.

Our Ethical Policy and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy are both new, but have had information from various existing company documents compiled together into concise coherent policy documents.



## — Carbon

Calculate our carbon footprint within scopes 1, 2 and 3 of our business – stage 1

### Our Progress

This has been done with Earthly through achieving our Climate Positive Business Certification, where we offset 110% of our carbon within the first three scopes of our business by investing in nature-based projects.

Calculate our carbon footprint for scopes 3 and 4 of our business – stage 2

#### Short term

- Begin by calculating the carbon emissions from our freight and offsetting this.
- Conduct a life cycle assessment on one line of our products – the first one will be our sports clothing. Begin offsetting this.

#### Long term

- Move on to conduct a life cycle assessment for our metal products and offset this.

- Once this is complete, we will be able to offset the carbon emissions of all our bespoke non-stock products and provide information for all these products on our website.
- Work with UK suppliers to develop a plan for this.
- Push our UK products more to reduce the footprint from freight.

### Our Progress

So far, we have offset 110% of our carbon emissions associated with all freight via UPS and DHL couriers. We have received our LCA on our sports clothing and are about to begin offsetting this. So, the next stage is to look into doing this for our bespoke metal products that we produce in China.

We will then move on to our longer-term plan of working with our UK suppliers to develop an offsetting plan for our UK supplied stock products.

Create initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint for each scope and stage.

- Go through our Earthly report and LCA's to develop a plan for how we can reduce our carbon.
- Work with our courier companies to see how we can reduce our footprint.
- Set clear targets in percentages and time for reducing carbon rates - to be done once research is finished.

## Our Progress

We have currently not looked into this. However, our next carbon counting review will be due in May 2023 so we will begin to look at initiatives we can implement to reduce this in the new year.

## — Plastic

Create initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint for each scope and stage.

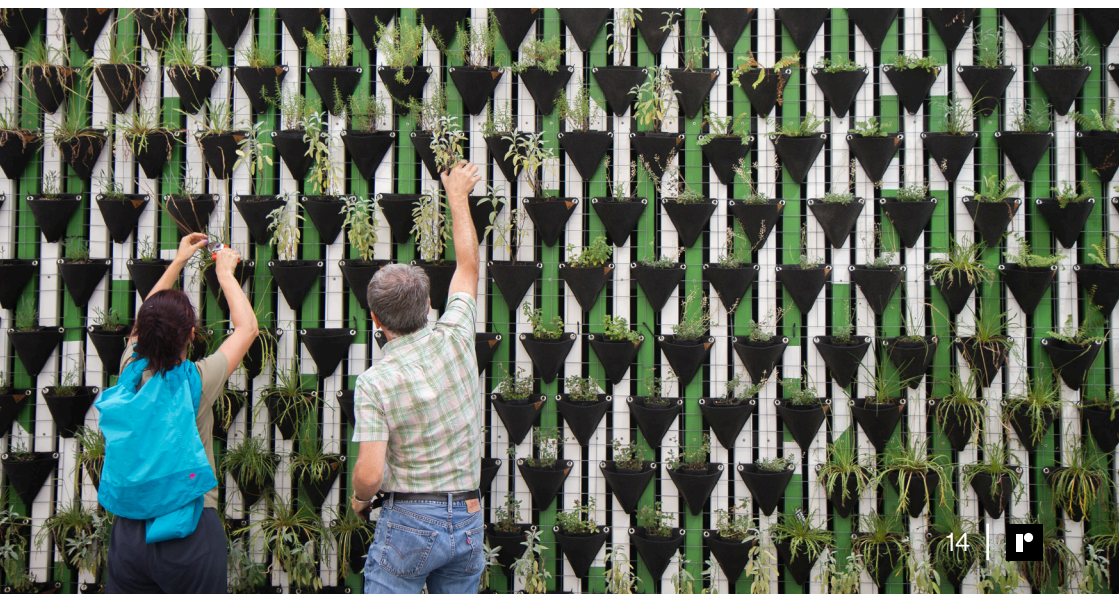
- Bulk pack into paper bags where possible.
- Individually wrap things in tissue paper.
- Use glassine, compostable or paper bags for sports clothing.

## Our Progress

We currently use biodegradable or recycled plastic bags as standard for our products, with the option to not have bags or have products packed into paper bags or tissue paper for an additional cost.

We are currently working with suppliers to swap to paper packaging, ensuring that it is durable, recyclable and of FSC quality.

We plan to move to plastic free packaging by the end of 2023.



## — Energy

Move to a renewable energy provider once our current plan is up.

### Our Progress

Our current plan ends in September 2023, so we are currently researching renewable energy suppliers to switch to.

**Investigate the types of energy our suppliers use and set a plan and end date for when we will only work with suppliers that use renewable energy.**

- Create a survey for all suppliers on energy use - current use, future plans, what they have available to them
- Use this to decide when we will make it mandatory for all suppliers to only use renewable energy

### Our Progress

We are currently creating the survey that we will use to send round to suppliers for this.

Once we receive this back from our factories, we will then work with them to see if they can use 100% renewable sources for their energy and set a date from which we will only work with suppliers that use 100% renewable energy.

## — Other

Enforce a paperless and recycling policy to improve office recycling and paper use.

### Our Progress

We have put recycling rules next to our recycling bins and increased the number of recycling bins around the office. We have begun collecting all packaging sent to the office from suppliers, to be used when we send out new products and samples to clients as opposed to using new packaging.

**Develop an eco-sourcing system on our website so clients can easily filter and chose responsible products.**

- Create eco and UK made icons.
- Have a filter option on the tool bar for responsible products.
- Clearly state the components of our responsible products that makes them so.

### Our Progress

We have started this by adding a 'how can I make this product more sustainable' section on each product, as well as having a link to our ethical sourcing guide for clients. The next stage is to add the icons and filter options.



Add the 'sustainability credentials' for each product on our website.

Have this spanning across the different stages of a product's life cycle:

- Where it is made
- Materials
- How it is packaged
- How it is cared for
- How it is disposed of/life span/durability
- It's carbon footprint

## Our Progress

This will first be done for our bespoke products made in our Pakistan and Chinese factories.

We will need to work with our UK suppliers to get this information for all the stock products we hold. We could also work with our catalogue supplier to get this information published in the main catalogue so that it is compulsory for all suppliers to provide.

This information will replace the 'how can I make this product more sustainable section' and will be published alongside a link to our responsible merchandise guide.



# — Product

## Design Considerations

These are areas for employees to consider when offering products to clients. These are all included in our responsible merchandise guides for employees and clients. These areas have been chosen to cover all stages of a products life. This information is available on a shared folder available to all employees, is on our website and has recently been sent out as a mailer to all our clients.

## AREAS TO CONSIDER

Is the product made of responsible materials?

- Recycled materials
- Cellulose fibres
- Organic fibres
- Materials that can be disposed of in a responsible manner

What is the longevity of the product?

How is the product packaged?

How the product can be disposed of:

- Can it be recycled?

## Our Progress

We have created two responsible merchandise guides for employees and clients that highlight the above factors in much more detail. We have created two separate ones as the employee one is designed to help employees understand more about how to make a product responsible, the correct questions to ask suppliers, and how to understand clients needs.

The client one has been created to help them determine what they want from a responsible product, and what they should be asking our sales team.

We have also created a guide to alternative materials and an eco-friendly fact sheet to help both our employees and clients understand more about how to make a product responsible.

Going forwards, it is a topic that should be discussed with all clients when they are looking for a new product, or if they are placing a repeat order to see if they could improve the sustainability of their existing order.

We will also be quoting for a responsible alternative alongside any non-responsible products that are enquired about.

## — Materials

Work out what percentage of the products we sell are made from natural, synthetic, or cellulose materials.

- Use this information to work out how prosperous they are.

### Our Progress

We have not yet done this, but plan to complete this by the end of the financial year (April 2023).

**Ensure that if products have an eco-credential, that this is certified.**

- Make sure that this information is on the responsible UK suppliers information sheet for employees – to ensure that we are only selling certified responsible products.
- Work with suppliers to ensure any products that aren't certified are able to get this to avoid greenwashing.

### Our Progress

We always ensure that we get certification for our responsible products when clients ask for it.

We have not yet started doing this for all products but will begin to do so starting at the beginning of 2023.

We will begin with our bespoke metal and clothing products before moving to those supplied in the UK.

All this information will then be stored in our supply chain maps and supplier profiles for all employees to access. This will ensure that we are only selling certified responsible products.

**Work with suppliers on innovation to develop more responsible materials.**

- Discuss what responsible products we are looking for with our existing suppliers and if it would be possible for them to develop these.

### Our Progress

We have worked with our suppliers to expand the range of our sports clothing that is made from recycled materials. We have also increased the range of sustainable badge, medal, and keyring options as we now offer these made from MDF or bamboo.

We can also offer recycled polyester for our medal ribbons, lanyards, and wristbands. We have worked with our suppliers to offer more responsible packaging, as we now pack our products in biodegradable bags as standard.

We are looking to take this further to remove all plastic packaging from our products by working with suppliers to use recyclable paper or bulk packaging.

We are going to go animal product free by July 2023.

## Our Progress

We do not sell many products made from animal fibres, but we must ensure that those we are swapping to a vegan alternative have responsible credentials and are not made from virgin plastic.

This is company policy and employees check this whenever placing orders of these products.

Create responsible care guides for clothing.

## Our Progress

This has been done and starting in January 2023, we are going to send these out with each of our clothing orders. We have two guides, one for sports clothing and one for cotton clothing. This is to ensure that the different materials are being cared for in the most responsible way possible.



## — Prosperity

### VALUE

Report what percentage of products sold are responsible.

- To work out how much our changes and marketing is influencing purchasing decisions.

Measure if all spending on sustainability increases equity.

- To work out if it is benefitting the company economically as well as socially and environmentally – to encompass all areas of sustainability.

### Our Progress

We have not done this but will have this completed by the end of the financial year (April 2023).

### INVEST

Innovative materials

- This can involve investing in current suppliers to help them develop new, innovative, and responsible materials. It can also involve working with new, more responsible suppliers or trying new more responsible products from existing suppliers.
- To do this we will create a list of the products that we are looking for and

contact our suppliers to see if they can do them. If they cannot, we will work to see if it is possible for them to create them. We will research new suppliers that we can begin working with who already create responsible products and share our values. We will also research any new responsible products that our current suppliers produce that we can start offering our clients.

- We will ensure that all these products are certified as responsible in the ways in which they state they are.

### Our Progress

We have been working with some of our responsible UK suppliers more in the last year. This has been through promoting their products in our marketing but also by adding them onto quotes as a responsible alternative to what they may have enquired about. We have also increased the sales of our recycled sportswear, lanyards and wristbands and our wooden badges and medals by boosting our marketing on this and adding them on quotes as a responsible alternative when applicable.

We have certification that all these products are responsible. We are yet to begin investing in new responsible materials; however, this is something we plan to research in 2023.

## Supply chain

- This will involve investing time and money into employees throughout our supply chain to achieve our goals as highlighted in our people section.
- We will also invest in technology if needed to help our current suppliers to create more innovative and responsible products that help people and the planet.

## Our Progress

We currently have certifications for all our factories, showing that they are SMETA audited and workers are therefore treated fairly. Our supplier code of conduct also shows this and that our factories are inline with the SA8000. However, we do not do this with our third-party suppliers (those who supply materials to our factories) so this is something we will look into in 2023 to develop our supply chain profiles and maps. We also will spend more time with our contacts at our factories to ensure that staff wellbeing is looked after.

**Educate employees so they can promote and pass on what we are doing to clients**

- We will do this through running semi-annual sustainability workshops, sending out employee emails with any

updates to our sustainability practices, and creating sustainability information packs that are accessible to all employees.

## Our Progress

We have been holding semi-annual **company wide** sustainability meetings to ensure all employees are up to date on our practices. We also send out emails to all employees when we make a change to our practices or take a new step on our responsibility plan.

So far, we have created the following guides: **eco friendly** fact sheet, a guide to alternative materials, and a responsible product sourcing guide. All these guides are stored on a shared folder, available to all employees.

## COMMITMENT

By publishing this report to all staff, clients, and the general public, we can now be held accountable to our plans, targets and promises. This will also push us to stick to our commitments on time goals and plans.

Ensure that even though we are calculating and offsetting our carbon footprints across our business, that we are making an effort to continuously reduce this.



# CONCLUSION

We know we have committed to doing a lot. However, we believe that these changes are necessary to help reduce our own impacts, those of our entire supply chain, and to push others in our industry to do the same. We aim to be a leader of responsible promotional merchandise so we can achieve our goals and help clients to achieve theirs. We are currently well under way with stages 1 and 2 of our roadmap, having made quite a few achievements thus far.

Currently, we are in the midst of projects and plans for stage 3, having already begun offsetting the carbon of the first 3 scopes of our business. At present we have finished the life cycle assessment for our sports clothing, and will begin offsetting this from January 2023. Following this we will begin to look into other products we can calculate this for. We also are going to begin developing supplier profiles and supply chain maps to make everything completely transparent for our employees and clients.

Using all this information we hope to begin plans to reduce our carbon footprint from the beginning of 2023. Given how much we have achieved as a business this year, in both a physical sense but also a mental shift in the way we operate, we are positive that even bigger and better things are coming for this next year.

We know that with our business model it is not possible for us to be 100% sustainable, but we know that all our changes are making a difference, and we excited for the plans we have to take this even further. This will improve our responsibility as a business but will also enable our clients to make more responsible choices for their merchandise without having to do the heavy research themselves.

Our aim is to change so that you (our client) don't have to. So please join us on our journey and chose us to be your responsible merchandise supplier!



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